

2005 National Emission Inventory (NEI) Development Plan

Questions and Answers

September 27, 2005

Summary:

Over the past year, stakeholders in the emissions inventory community, external advisory groups (e.g., CAAAC, NARSTO), as well as management within USEPA's OAR have called for changes to the emission inventory development process in general, and the National Emissions Inventory (NEI) development process, specifically. These changes are needed to meet the challenges of the next generation of air quality management programs.

Therefore, we (USEPA) are leading a reengineering effort, in collaboration with State/local/tribal (S/L/T) agencies, to identify and implement process and technology improvements to: (1) create a more efficient way to develop the NEI and (2) to develop an NEI that is more accurate, timely, and transparent. We anticipate that we will begin to see the benefits of the reengineering effort for the 2008 NEI. Some of the features of the reengineered NEI will be:

- More accurate and robust emission estimates
- Improved access to NEI data;
- Stream-lined data submission;
- Quicker error notification and correction; and
- Better tools for quality assurance and transparency.

To ensure adequate resources to complete the NEI reengineering effort, we plan to prepare the 2005 NEI based on a reduced level of effort. We propose to develop the 2005 NEI using adjusted 2002 NEI estimates (previously reviewed by both S/L/Ts and USEPA) and 2005 emissions for the power and mobile source sectors.

- What are our proposed plans for developing the 2005 NEI and beyond?
 - We propose to use the 2002 NEI as the basis for the 2005 NEI, and make only the highest value-added adjustments from readily available datasets, such as incorporating electric utility data from our Clean Air Markets Division (CAMD) and running the MOBILE6 and NONROAD models for 2005 mobile source results. We will also seek information on large point source closures for incorporation and investigate a low-cost method to include actual 2005 wildfire emissions. Please note that this proposed approach is only intended for the 2005 NEI cycle. For the 2008 and beyond NEI cycles, we intend to implement the reengineered NEI process developed in conjunction with S/L/T agencies.

- Why are we proposing to change our plans for developing the 2005 NEI?
 - In response to feedback from our stakeholders, including S/L/T partners, we need to reinvent and reengineer the NEI process and its supporting information technology (IT) structure, targeted to produce the 2008 and beyond NEIs in a more timely, transparent, and cost-effective manner for all stakeholders. Initially, the 2005 NEI development had been seen as a transitional effort, piloting some new methods, but necessarily relying on existing processes and IT systems. Now, considering the demands for both staff time and contract dollars for the reengineering effort to be successful, we have determined that efforts on the 2005 NEI must be significantly limited. As stated above, our intention is that resources saved by limiting the effort on the 2005 NEI will be used to jointly develop a sustainable process for developing the NEI in 2008 and beyond. Also, we do not currently foresee a regulatory application for a 2005 NEI that would require a more rigorous and costly approach.
 - We appreciate the significant time and effort S/L/Ts spent in planning schedule and process improvements for the 2005 NEI. We will use what we have learned from that collaborative effort as we move forward with the longer-term goal of NEI reengineering.
- How do we plan to use the data submitted by S/L/Ts for 2005?
 - It is still important that we receive 2005 data from our S/L/T partners as required by the CERR. We will use the data as submitted rather than focusing resources on combining data submitted into a single national inventory. To reduce resource expenditures by both USEPA and our S/L/T partners, we suggest that you continue to use the same NIFv3.0 format as you used for your 2002 submittals. If you choose to submit your 2005 data in some other electronic format, we ask that it be self-documented sufficiently to allow other users to understand your data. Note that we are proposing to suspend development support for NIF v4.0 for 2005 submittals.
 - There are a number of interested parties that may want to see the submitted data for 2005, especially for individual point sources. Under this proposal, we will post the S/L/T data on the NEI web site in “as received” condition, along with any supplemental documentation or links to the S/L/Ts’ web pages. We will also analyze the submitted data for 2005 to identify significant large-scale changes from 2002 emission totals, number of facilities, etc. and to learn from the 2005 files where opportunities exist to improve the process for 2008 and beyond.
- When do we propose to complete the 2005 NEI?
 - We propose to complete and post the final 2005 NEI by December 2006.

- What are the benefits of this proposed approach?
 - This proposed approach will allow both the USEPA and our S/L/T partners to jointly focus on a sustainable long term strategy for improving EIs in general, and the NEI specifically. During 2006 and 2007, when USEPA and S/L/T agencies would normally be laboring under the old NEI process to develop a 2005 NEI, we expect to redeploy substantial resources toward a collaborative effort on designing an improved NEI process and IT system for the future. The long-term benefits of using these resources to focus on the future will outweigh the short-term detriment of reduced effort on the 2005 NEI.
 - In addition to the long-term benefits that will be realized as a result of the reengineered NEI, we envision three benefits for our S/L/T partners:
 - Continued use of NIF v3.0 will require less resources spent on formatting 2005 data;
 - Less resources spent on back and forth communication with USEPA on 2005 data; and
 - More opportunities to provide input to the NEI Reengineering.
- Who can you contact for further questions on the 2005 NEI plans?
 - Call or email Doug Solomon, (919) 541-4132 or solomon.douglas@epa.gov.
- How can you get involved in the NEI reengineering process?
 - We are very interested in hearing your concerns and ideas. We are scheduling visits to each EPA Region in the October 2005 to March 2006 time frame to discuss the 2005 NEI and reengineering processes in more detail. We also plan to provide other opportunities for you to get involved in the NEI reengineering as the plans evolve. A web site is available (www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/eis.html) to provide an overview of current plans, or you may contact Martin Husk (919-541-3621 or husk.martin@epa.gov) or Doug Solomon (919-541-4132 or solomon.douglas@epa.gov).